

PSV-109
10 WAYS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS
IN PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

Modified and added to by Earl Pack

Based on an article by William L. Continelli – AB2CA

1. Make sure your radio is in top operating condition. Small problems (such as loose antenna connections, bad microphones, intermittent operation, etc.) may be just annoying during casual operation, but WILL cause major grief under the continuous/severe service of net/emergency operation. If your radio's not in 100% top shape, buy, beg, or borrow one.
2. Don't operate your handheld with it hanging on your belt. Using the radio while it's strapped to your waist reduces your effective radiated power by more than 10 dB. That's 90% reduction in power! Hold the radio in your hand, with the antenna in the clear.
3. Regarding antennas, those 3" rubber dummy loads may be cute, but you're throwing away 3-6 dB of power when using one. A telescoping half-wave has a gain of as much as 10 dB over a 3" rubber duck and a quarter - wave provides 4-6 dB improvement. Even a 12-15" rubber duck will boost your signal by 3-6 dB over the 3" ones. Remember that one dB can mean the difference in whether or not a critical message gets through.
4. Have charged batteries and spare battery packs! If you also have a dry cell battery case, fill it with alkaline batteries. Make sure you have enough batteries with you through, even on high power.
5. Use headphones or an earphone rather than a speaker/mike. Most earphones will plug directly into your HT. Low cost stereo headphones are widely available and will work perfectly with your HT using a mono to stereo adapter. The headphones also have the advantage of concentrating the audio in your ears, while partially shutting off the outside noise. They will also prolong battery life by allowing the radio to operate at a lower audio level. A speaker/mike is the worst thing you can use - it doesn't cut the outside noise, it doesn't save batteries, and where is that HT antenna while you're using the speaker/mike? (Hint – at you hip?)
6. Speak slowly and clearly when transmitting! You may take pride in your ability to run your words together and mumble, but the station on the other end may be in a noisy environment and may not receive your message.
7. Check out your ability to use simplex. Even if the operation is being conducted on a repeater, there may be "dead spots", the repeater may go down, or, sad to say, there may be jamming. Even if you can work the 2 or 3 stations closest to you, a message can still be relayed. To maximize your simplex range, please reread #2 and #3.
8. Listen to net control and direct all communication through him/her. Identify your station when calling net control and keep all communications direct and to the point.

9. If you must leave the radio or the area to which you have been assigned, first seek permission and acknowledgement from the net control station, make your "time off" as short as possible, and check back in with NCS immediately upon your return.
10. Project a good image to the non-hams around you that are part of the event/emergency. This means acting professionally, using basic hygiene skills, etc.

Adding to the article. You can obtain remote mounted antenna adapters for your HT so that you can put the HT on your belt or in your vest pocket, but mount the antenna higher on a backpack or hat.

Credit goes out to "RF MUSINGS", newsletter of the Schenectady Museum Amateur Radio Association - Schenectady, NY. The author can be contacted on the internet at 103407.3364@compuserve.com or at his FCC database address.